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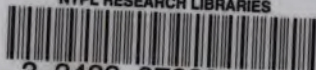
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A Pioneer from Kentucky



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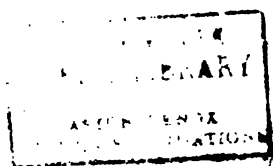
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"At the mouth of the cañon. . . . where Clariss stood earnestly watching their actions." (Page 94.)



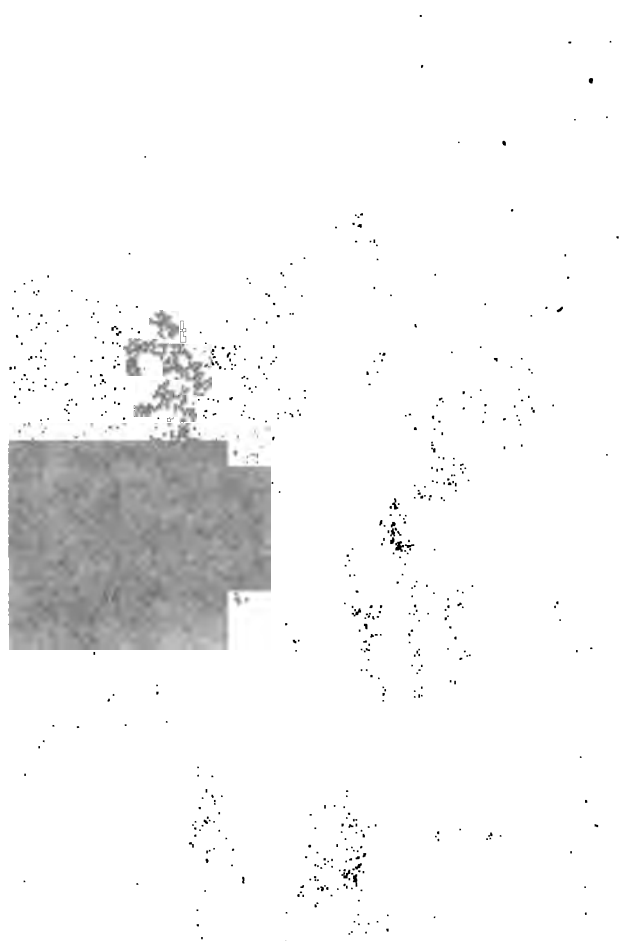
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A Pioneer from Kentucky

An Idyl
of the Raton Range

COLONEL HENRY INMAN

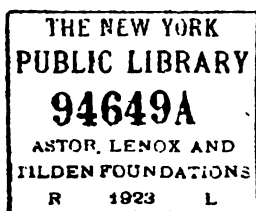


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To My Wife,

THE MOST ESTIMABLE OF WOMEN.

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CHAPTER I.

The Log Cabin of the Raton Range.

OVER forty years ago there stood at the entrance of one of the great cañons in the Raton Range, a rude cabin constructed in the simplest style of backwoods architecture : unhewn logs placed together at the ends, after the manner in which children build their corncob playhouses in the country, and the interstices "chinked" with mud.

It had only two windows and one door, the latter formed of rough clapboards fastened together with wooden

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

pins and hung on hinges of the same material.

The flat roof was composed of similarly roughly riven clapboards which were kept in position by long, heavy oak saplings laid lengthwise on the building at intervals from each other, and over the whole a mass of earth nearly two feet deep was deposited.

The floor of the hut, as in all of the houses of the poor in New Mexico, was the natural earth, and the fireplace a huge affair built diagonally across the corner of the single room, of adobe or sunburnt brick.

Every vestige of that little home in the mountains has long since disappeared: in fact, so nearly has its history been relegated by remorseless time to oblivion, but few inhabitants

THE LOG CABIN.

of that now relatively populous region are aware that it ever existed.

Where the smoke of the red man's solitary tepee curled in thin wreaths among the giant cottonwoods on the bottom, near the stream that ran by the door, the track of the great Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé Railway now crosses, and the echoes of the primitive forest, the rocky cañons and the cloud-capped peaks are awakened by the shrill whistle of the "Cyclone Train" as it rushes around the awful curves and on the brink of terrible precipices with breathless speed, bearing its heavy burden of living freight to the golden shores of the Pacific.

The spot where this simple hut was located is one of the most picturesque beautiful nooks in all the vast

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

continental chain of the Rockies. The unbroken wall of the cañon rises abruptly on one side for more than two thousand feet, where under its deep shadow the cabin snugly nestled ; at the opposite side, scarcely four hundred feet distant, a corresponding wall shoots up to nearly the same height.

This fearful rent in the range was made thousands of ages ago by one of those terrible convulsions of nature sufficiently potent to engulf an Atlantis, visible on every hand in the Rocky Mountains—for it is easily discernible that the two walls of the immense cañon were originally joined, and what was primitively a great crack in the solid granite, erosion and denudation, requiring æons of time, have

THE LOG CABIN.

worn the terrific gorge through the once impenetrable barrier!

The broad entrance to the cañon and immediate environment of where the cabin was built is a perfect wilderness of beauty. A hundred perennial springs, accessory sources of the torrent that in the early summer rushes madly through the little valley, gush out from the bases of tall cliffs, whose serrated crests stand like Titan towers above the oaks grouped in symmetrical clumps on the boulder-scattered escarpment far below; and these babbling rills, as they trickle over the smoothly worn pebbles in their shallow beds, send up the rhythmic murmur of their sparkling water, in sweet concert with the ever-whispering pines. Entwining gnarled old cottonwoods,

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

whose gigantic trunks have withstood the wintry blasts of centuries, fantastically interlinking the piñon's ever-green mazes, clinging tenderly to the sprays of the mountain willow, or roughly adhering to the cañon walls themselves, the ampelopsis and the wild grape luxuriate in all the gracefulness of their persistent involvement.

From the velvety sod of gramma-grass, which carpets the lovely little valley's slopes, sweetly scented violets, blue and pink anemones, the creamy-petaled yucca, and a dozen varieties of many-colored cacti in the splendor of their consecutive unfolding, mirror the gorgeous tints of the peerless mid-continent sky.

When all these, the floral proems

THE LOG CABIN.

of spring and summer, have ceased to garland the lawn-like intervalles, "the aster in the woods, the sunflower by the brookside, and the golden-rod, last of autumn's blooming," paint the landscape as in rugged New England; but the type of this flora is more beautiful in the mountains, and its season greatly prolonged.

There, in an unfrequented fastness of the "eternal hills," surrounded by Nature's gorgeous embodiment of her architecture, lived, solitary and secluded, more than a generation ago, Dick Curtis and Clariss, his young wife—

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

It was years before a transcontinental railroad was believed to be a

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

possibility, and all the commerce of the Great Plains was by that broad path through the Desert and over the blue hills guarding the portals of ultramontane New Mexico, the old Santa Fé trail, now a mere memory.

CHAPTER II.

Dick Curtis the Hunter— Clariss.

DICK CURTIS was a Kentuckian—tall, brawny, broad-shouldered and wiry, true characteristics of his immediate ancestors; for his forefathers had emigrated from Virginia at the period of the great exodus in 1780 into the region of Kan-tuck-kee (the Bloody Ground), so called because of the sanguinary opposition of the aborigines to its invasion by the whites.

His father had been a leader of men in those perilous times of the border, and was naturally an Indian

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

fighter and hater of the race, as was his wife, who saw her husband butchered at the threshold of her cabin by savages! So Dick's antipathy to the "cussed breed," as he termed the Indians, had been imbibed at his mother's breast, and was the direct result of antenatal influences,—for he was not yet born at the time of the tragedy which precluded the possibility of his ever knowing his sire. His implacable detestation of the Indian, therefore, was part of his nature by the inexorable law of heredity: he did not try to eliminate it, nor would he have succeeded had he essayed to do so.

Clariss Pollock was one of those "sweet woodland beauties" who may occasionally be discovered in such bar-

DICK AND CLARISS.

barous regions as the Ozark hills of Missouri, the pine-barrens of Arkansas, or the mountains of the Appalachian chain south of the Ohio.

She was ignorant, illiterate, and dialectic in expression of thought, it is true, the normal reflex of an uncultivated and provincial environment; but she was as a lily among weeds—pure as the breeze that soughed through the pines surrounding her childhood's home. She possessed a scrupulous conscientiousness and innocence superior to that which the most careful culture can evolve, and was the very impersonation of grace—a veritable exponent of what capricious Nature permits sometimes in the incorporeal, as she does often in the corporeal world.

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

Dick first saw Clariss at her rude mountain hearthstone, in the Cumberland Range which marks the eastern boundary of his native State, one night when a fearful storm had overtaken him near her father's cabin, and he was driven by its violence to seek the friendly shelter. He was at once dazed by her exceptional beauty and superbly proportioned figure, as she handed him a gourdful of water she had just dipped from a spring near the door, as he was about to enter. Hers was a type of beauty as foreign to that region, and to which only he was accustomed, as is the graceful palm of the tropics.

His strangely magnificent physique, too, captivated the imaginative young girl immediately; for she, as is wo-

DICK AND CLARISS.

mankind generally, was susceptible to those attractions of the opposite sex—strong arms, broad shoulders, and manly muscular symmetry, all of which Dick could claim in a remarkable degree. No wonder, then, that the sympathetic Clariss should admire that giant among a race of giants, as were nearly all the men in the region where she was reared.

Dick was a born hunter; he inherited his prowess in the chase from a remote ancestry, the line having come down to him without a single break through seven generations, the record of which, in rude legendary form, was current in the neighborhood. His whole life from boyhood had been passed in the forests of the "bloody ground," and the most familiar bed

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

to his stalwart form was the lichen-covered rocks of the mountain gorges, or pine-needles piled up under stately trees. In fact, until Clariss "kim 'cross his trail," he almost lived in the woods, rarely coming to the "settlement" except to barter for his pelts, and then remaining only long enough to accomplish his errand.

But game began to get scarce as immigration encroached upon the fertile valleys, and Dick talked seriously of "pullin' out" for some new place, "no matter whar, ef thar war varmints a plenty." So, with indifferent luck for eighteen months after he "fust sot eyes on Clariss," he hunted the range near her home; but his wanderings, after that vision of beauty, were never so prolonged as previously.

DICK AND CLARISS.

Once a week at least, oftener twice, and always on Sunday, "he war boun' ter fetch up at old Tom Pollock's," Clariss's father, where, in the rough but hearty manner of the simple mountaineer, he was warmly welcomed, and there was already a tacit understanding that "he war ter marry the gyrl."

CHAPTER III.

Dick bears of the "Hunter's Paradise."

It was at Tom Pollock's, one night, when a young attorney from a town in the valley on the Tennessee side of the divide, who had been on a fishing expedition in the range, was lost, separated from his companions, and, belated, compelled to seek shelter in Pollock's humble cabin, that Dick Curtis first heard of such a region as the Rocky Mountains.

That was in October, 1848, after the ratification of the treaty which transferred New Mexico to the United

THE "HUNTER'S PARADISE."

States, and the supposed wonderful country we had just acquired was the principal topic of discussion wherever newspapers were read. The latter essential, however, precluded the possibility of the fact ever reaching the knowledge of the inmates of Tom Pollock's cabin through such a medium; but the subject was introduced there by the lawyer that evening, in a conversation naturally provoked, when Dick complained in a mild way of the "scursity of game in them parts," in answer to a little chaffing about his returning from the woods without having bagged anything, after having been gone three days.

"Why don't you cross the Plains, and take up a 'squatter's claim' in the Rocky Mountains—say New Mex-

ico? There 's plenty of game there; large game, too—bears, wolves, deer, elk, and panthers; and no one to kill them except a few miserable Indians," suggested the attorney to Dick.

The latter, who was tilted back against the huge stone chimney, in a dilapidated rush-bottomed chair, pulling vigorously at an old corncob, half hidden in the dense cloud of smoke his big lungs had pumped out of the strong home-grown weed, straightened up, and laying his pipe on the hearth, looked intently at his questioner, and drawlingly said:

"Waal, I'll be dad-burned! An' nothin' but pesky Injins thar ter kill 'em?"

The young man, noticing how his simple suggestion had affected the

THE "HUNTER'S PARADISE."

lethargic mountaineer, then continued to expatiate with a sort of desultory eloquence upon the advantage of such "a hunter's paradise," as he termed it, and painted a word-picture so realistic that the now thoroughly aroused Dick, emerging from his shell of normal reticence, anxiously inquired in his peculiar intonation:

"Whar is them thar Rocky Mountings, Mister? Kin folkses git thar on beastes?"

Then waiting a moment to recover from surprise at his own volubility, he continued:

"I'll be dad-burned, Tom Pollock, ef thar ain't whar I means ter go! Ther settlemint's hyar is a-gettin' too clost; folkses is a-drivin' all ther varmints outen ther kentry; an' we-uns

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

ez hain't no other layout fer ter live hez got ter git, I 'low, an' ther sud-dinter ther better fer sich.—Kin yer tell we-uns, Mister, how ter git yan-der?"

Waiting until Dick had subsided and was pulling at his cob again, an evidence that he had exhausted his colloquial powers for the time being, the obliging attorney then gave him a long explanation, fully answering all his interrogatories, specific and inferred, which was listened to attentively and thoughtfully absorbed.

Soon after Dick had received the desired enlightenment, all but he and Clariss retired,—the lawyer on a pallet which had been improvised by Mrs. Pollock, principally out of bearskins, behind some common homespun dra-

THE "HUNTER'S PARADISE."

pery at one side, where also, in two other places, the same appliance divided the single room of the cabin into compartments approaching something of privacy at least.

Clariss then, who had been all the evening hidden in the shadow of one of the obscure corners, quietly knitting, without taking any part in the conversation, but an earnest and interested listener, came and sat before the huge fireplace with Dick, as was her wont on the occasion of his visits when the old folks had gone to bed.

For some time Dick gazed meditatively into the glowing embers; the girl close to him, one hand clasped in his, and her great lustrous blue eyes, full of perfect faith in the giant beside her, resting their penetrating

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

look on his now thoughtful face. For more than a quarter of an hour they thus silently sat, he deeply absorbed in the air-castles his mind was constructing from the material infused by the attorney and in him.

Suddenly Dick turned toward Clariss, and taking her other diminutive hand in his immense paws, he drew her gently forward and said:

“Little gyrl, will yer go to them thar Rocky Mountings 'long o' me, ef I'd wait tell spring? Thar's no use ter talk 'bout ch'ice fer me now; I must git outen hyar 'fore long, and atwixt we-uns, that thar descripti'n o' his'n [pointing toward where the lawyer was snoring] hez took my idee ter-nite; but seems like ez ef I'd be no 'count now, nowhar, 'thout yer

THE "HUNTER'S PARADISE."

wuz with me. I wants yer ter gin me yer feelin's on ther matter jess ez yer b'l'eve ye'd orter,—yet it's tol'ble suddint ter ax yer, I 'low."

He stroked her golden curls as if she were some pet animal, and then held her at arm's-length, watching her face as the light of the dying fire faintly illuminated it, while he eagerly waited for her answer.

"Ef yer 'low as 't was what yer'd oughter do, ter git outen hyar an' go yander ter them thar Rocky Mountings, Dick, I'd go anywhar yer wuz called ter go, yer know. Ef yer went 'thout a-takin' me I'd be powerful onhappy; an' ez things is atwixt we-uns, an' ther hull settlemint knows it, it war bes' yer tuk me 'long. No matter whar we-uns went, ef yer hev

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

got ter git, it can't be no wuss nor hyar in these hyar mountings. Pap he 'lowed ter mam 'tother day ye 'd be a-takin' on me off somewhar soon. He know'd yer war boun' ter lite out, he said, whar game war plenty. Mam she kind o' tuk on et fust, an' tol' him she'd bin a-thinkin' an' a-porin' over that ever sence we-uns hed tuk ter one 'nuther. I'd hate mos' powerful ter leave 'em, Dick, fer they hev sot a store by me, an' they's a-gettin' old, yer know; but ther Scriptur' say thet a womin kin leave her folkses an' cling ter her man. I mus' foller yer, Dick, an' they knows it. Yes, I'll go thar with yer ez soon ez spring comes an' we-uns is—jined, yer know."

Neither of these children of the

THE "HUNTER'S PARADISE."

mountains was ever demonstrative. They knew the fixity of their affection for each other, unexcitable as it may appear to those whose lives have been surrounded by a widely different civilization. But they were as happy in their love, ready to suffer if need be, contented with its measure, for it was as pure as the crystal waters that flowed from the springs at the bases of their native hills, and as enduring as the rocks that formed them.

Dick and Clariss, after this mutual understanding of a subject which was to change the current of their existence, retired to their sleeping-places, he to dream of fearful struggles with impossible "varminths," and she of her promise that night to him.

CHAPTER IV.

The Wedding— Good-by to "Kaintuck."

MAY, with its wealth of flowers and days resonant with the songs of birds, came to the beautiful region where Tom Pollock's rude cabin was the only deformity in all the landscape. Many pitied little Clariss when, on a golden afternoon about the middle of that month, she and Dick were "jined" by the "circuit rider" in the large room where on a memorable evening of the previous October she had pledged her young life to her hunter-lover's keeping. The fair-

GOOD-BY TO "KAINTUCK."

haired girl had been the pet and pride of the "settlemint," and the neighbors flocked to the simple rustic wedding, mourned her leaving, and pitied her because she seemed to be going to another world.

They had no more idea of the geography of the continent, outside of a few miles on both flanks of the range, than they had of the interior of Africa.

"Them thar Rocky Mountings" might as well have been part of the moon's topography, so distant were they in the minds of the ignorant residents on the border of Kentucky and Tennessee in those early days, and they knew as much about a railroad as they did of the tariff.

"Ef she war fool 'nuff ter marry

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

an' go 'way out thar, it war none o' their consarn; but they did think her folkses mus' be *detracted* ter gin the'r consent. 'Course she hed a right ter her ch'ice o' men, but they 'd be dad-burned ef they 'd go ter sech a heath-inish place fer no man!"

With such and kindred opinions expressed about the marriage, though never uttered in her hearing, Clariss left the rude home of her childhood to "tuk her chances with Dick."

After a tedious and uneventful journey across the Plains, the incidents of which do not properly belong to this story, they arrived at "them thar Rocky Mountings" in August, early in the month, selected their home at the mouth of the great cañon, and built the rude cabin al-

GOOD-BY TO "KAINTUCK."

ready described, after many days of labor and severe trials of patience.

Dick, perfectly contented with his new home in the wilderness, hunted constantly in its immediate vicinity, for he loved his profession; and he did not have to walk whole days without success, as he had been obliged to do back in Kentucky, to keep the larder supplied, and barter for the limited number of necessaries his vocation demanded. The foothills abounded in black-tail deer, the best venison in the world; silver-tip, cinnamon and grizzly bear; otter, beaver, lynx, panther, and the "big horn"*; while on the plains below, vast herds of buffalo, elk and antelope roamed almost as countless as the pine-needles in the

*Rocky Mountain sheep.

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

forest on the mountain-side. He was supremely happy with the companionship of his young wife and the congenial atmosphere of his surroundings; for it was a veritable hunter's paradise, as the attorney who had first suggested his coming there declared.

CHAPTER V.

Clariss, the "Golden Fawn."

THE Utes, the most powerful and numerous of all the mountain tribes, from the moment of Dick's and Clariss's advent into their domain, were exceedingly friendly; but it was due solely to the gentle methods of the warm-hearted, sympathetic girl in her treatment of the savages. They often camped in large numbers for weeks together on the creek bottom, or in the heavy timber that fringed the stream near the cabin.

On these occasions the squaws al-

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

ways evinced a decided attachment to the "Golden Fawn," as they called Clariss, who presided over the fortunes of the wooden lodge of the white hunter. They would frequently present her with a handsomely beaded pair of moccasins, or a heavily fringed and porcupined buckskin skirt made out of the softest doe's-hide, the work of their own deft fingers; while she in turn made them small gifts of coffee, sugar and flour as her limited stock of these articles, so difficult to obtain, permitted, or initiated them into the mysteries of her kitchen.

She was as yet very happy in her simple home. She made a study of the Indian character, soon familiarized herself with their speech, and

THE "GOLDEN FAWN."

became an expert in the strange and fascinating sign-language, so perfect in its symbolization. Had she possessed the power of imparting her wonderful knowledge by correctly transcribing it, she could have presented a more definite and plausible argument in relation to the vexed Indian question than Congress has in all the years devoted to the subject.

Absolutely unused to the culture and refinement of our so-called higher civilization, but inheriting that love of solitude characteristic of the class from which she sprung, her utter isolation from "the madding crowd" had no other effect than to intensely develop her natural love for the primitive in creation; so the magnificent scenery, the roar of the torrent, and

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

the wilderness of floral beauty surrounding her home, wrought a condition of contentment it is impossible for the pampered children of luxury to understand.

So little of his time did it require to procure skins of the valuable fur-bearing animals in sufficient number to supply the necessities for their primitive style of living, Dick found an abundance of leisure; so every year, in accordance with Clariss's wise suggestion when they first took up their abode in the mountains, he cultivated a small garden patch in the fertile creek bottom, where he raised a variety of vegetables, that grew with an almost tropical luxuriance, so richly did the virgin soil respond to the demands made upon it.

CHAPTER VI.

The First Shadow **upon the Cabin Home.**

LATE one fall—November, 1853, as the legend hath it—when the harvest of the little garden had been gathered, and stored by “caching” in a “dugout” in the hillside back of the cabin, Dick, for the first time since his settlement there, began to develop a spirit of restlessness, which the keen eyes of his wife quickly discovering, disturbed her seriously. It first manifested itself in more prolonged absences from home; instead of hunting among the hills for only two or three

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

hours at a time, he now remained away the whole day, and when he did return at night was always in a gloomy mood, and more reticent than ever.

He had now determined upon an extended trip into the region of the Sangre de Christo Pass and Spanish Peaks, far away to the north, which resolution he reluctantly disclosed to Clariss one evening a short time after he had made up his mind to go, as they sat before the fire discussing a very successful day's work, which had somewhat raised his spirits; for he had killed in less than half a day four black-tailed deer and two brown bears, besides finding that all his beaver traps had caught a victim.

Clariss, to whom Dick's slightest

THE FIRST SHADOW.

word was law, so deep was her affection and such her confidence in his wisdom, merely permitted one little sigh to escape as she learned of his proposed absence, the first since their marriage. She knew no fear; it was not any dread of being left alone, in the rigid acceptation of the term, that worried her. She had frequently passed whole weeks at her father's cabin in the Cumberland Range with no companion but her cat: it was Dick's presence that she required constantly, now that he belonged to her, or the sun would not shine so brightly and the flowers would lose their sweetness. Of that terror which solitude brings to some natures, Clariss was as ignorant as she was of the calculus.

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

“Waal,” said she to Dick, after he had made her believe that it was necessary that he should go, and they were discussing the impending journey—“waal, ef yer hez got ter go, ez long ez I hev got Tige an’ Buck I shan’t hev no call ter be afeard o’ nothin’; them dorgs kin tuk car’ o’ me. Ther Injins won’t be a-ram-pagin’ ’round, an’ thar hain’t nothin’ but varmints else, which them thar dorgs kin manage.”

“Them thar dorgs,” to which Clariss referred so confidently, were two magnificent specimens of their species,—great grizzled animals, half blood- and half stag-hounds, with all the ferocity and endurance of both breeds combined. Either could vanquish a gray wolf in single combat,

THE FIRST SHADOW.

and together they were a match for a mountain lion, as the American cougar is called in the West. Neither "Buck" nor "Tige" possessed much of that affection generally found in the domestic dog family; that is to say, they had no love for anyone—red, black, or white—other than Dick and Clariss, so carefully had they been trained. At a word from either master or mistress they would have torn a man in pieces, or attacked the most ferocious beast in the whole Range; they were equally obedient in the heat of their greatest rage, and would desist when ordered, though at the throat of a grizzly that was doing its best to disembowel them at the moment. They never intruded themselves at inopportune times. A

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

stranger might have remained at the cabin for days without fear of attack, (although his every movement would have been watched,) unless he committed some overt act.

As stated, for some time Dick had been more than usually restless and surly, but never disrespectful to Clariss; and the strange mood manifested itself more positively whenever it happened that the friendly Utes took up their camp in the timber, or on the grassy bottom near his cabin. Now, he never went near them as he used to in days gone by, and if on coming home after a hunt he saw that Clariss was entertaining a party of her dusky friends (he could always tell by their ponies picketed around the door), he would invariably turn

THE FIRST SHADOW.

back, walk up the cañon where he could watch without being seen, and sitting on some boulder would smoke his pipe vigorously, apparently deeply absorbed in his thoughts, often for hours, until the squaws had departed.

The subject of the Indian women's visits, although Clariss saw that their presence had a visible effect on Dick's actions, was not broached by either in their short nightly conversations at the cheerful fire in their humble home. She was well aware of his inherent hatred of the race, but said nothing; while he felt that in her solitariness the companionship of her own sex, though they were of the accursed breed, was a comfort to her, and in his rough but strong love for her he would not interrupt.

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

The cause of the change in Dick's conduct, which he very foolishly kept a profound secret from his confiding young wife, and which eventually overburdened him with sorrow, was this:

One morning, some weeks previous to his having told Clariss of his proposed extended hunting-trip north, while on a tour of inspection to his beaver and other traps scattered along the river for several miles, he had some trouble with an Indian, who had really, or Dick imagined it, been meddling with his skins, as some of them were missing, and without very much altercation the hot-headed fellow killed him, not giving him the least chance for his life. Dick felt a momentary qualm of self-reproach

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immediately, for upon looking around after the consummation of the deed, he saw a few rods distant in the timber a squaw with a child strapped to her back, who had evidently been a witness of the hellish act. She was half-sitting, half-reclining at the foot of a great pine, tearing her hair and chanting the death-song of her tribe. Dick now knew that he had killed her husband and the father of her innocent babe.

He at once thought of Clariss. What would his young wife, so kind-hearted and charitable to the oppressed race, say if she knew of this ruthless murder? The squaw, perhaps, was one of her chosen companions.

For a few moments these thoughts

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chased each other through his brain; his anguish was something terrible, and he wished he could recall his rash act. But his compunctions soon subsided, for upon looking again to where the woman was, he saw her standing, gazing intently at him and making some motions with her fingers which he did not understand. Then, as she commenced to walk slowly away from him through the somber forest, vengeance unmistakably depicted in every line of her face, he felt all the inherent animosity of his nature come convulsively to his mind, and he chuckled inwardly that he had put another of the "dad-burned, no-'count cusses outen his way."

This murderer in the solitude of the

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Range did not, like Eugene Aram, make any attempt to conceal the object of his unwarranted vengeance; the "code of the border" implied no such precaution among its rules: so the now hardened Dick left the bones of his victim to be picked by the gray wolves, those ghouls of the mountains, and to bleach in the wintry sun.

CHAPTER VII.

Off for the Spanish Peaks.

As soon as breakfast was disposed of, one morning a few days after Dick had told Clariss he was going away, he gathered and assorted his accumulation of furs, packed them on three burros, and started on horseback over the trail for the old Mexican village of Ryado. He had always found a quick market there at the Agency store, and had never traded elsewhere since his settlement in the Territory; but he had not as yet visited the place in person, so loth had

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he been to leave Clariss even for one night. He had been in the habit of transacting all his business through the conductors of the Overland Line of coaches, who for a small commission received his skins at the station on Ute creek, transported them to Ryado, sold them, and brought back on the return trip such things as were needed, and the balance in cash. By this method Dick could go to the station and reach home again before night—a consideration that was lovingly appreciated by Clariss.

The trip to the village occupied four days of Dick's time, but to Clariss it seemed an age, for it was his first absence overnight since the day they were married. He arrived home about sundown, his animals laden

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with an ample supply of flour, bacon, sugar, coffee, and other things necessary to Clariss's comfort, sufficient to last six or eight weeks, the proposed duration of his hunting expedition to the Spanish Peaks.

The morning after his return Dick again discussed the question with Clariss of his going away, and while he made his preparations comforted her as well as his rough nature permitted, for he was really grieved to leave her. After dinner was over he gave her minute directions what to do during his absence, and when everything was ready took an affectionate farewell, struck out for the well-worn trail through the cañon and along the brink of the mesa above it. He was mounted on his

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favorite American horse which he had brought from Kentucky, and named for his native State, driving before him two burros on whose backs were packed his simple camp equipage and provisions, while following were his two inseparable hunting companions, thoroughbred deer-hounds, "Bruce" and "Pont." Resting across the horn of his saddle, a silver-mounted affair, was an old-fashioned rifle, but as true as a problem in Euclid, an heirloom through three generations, which, next to his young wife, he loved better than all his other possessions, for it had never yet played him false when he pulled the trigger.

Clariss, her soul filled with sorrow, sat on a projecting ledge of rock near the door of her cabin, watching her

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husband as his horse struggled up the zigzag that marked the precipitous trail of the mountain's side; remaining there until long after he had disappeared, and the shadows fell in the little valley, and the mottled owls in the tops of the blasted pines commenced their melancholy screech. Then, when night covered the cañon, and only the faintest tinge of purple marked the line of the serrated hill-crests, she sadly entered her now desolate hut, nearly heart-broken.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Ghastly Discovery.

JUST before daylight one clear cold morning in the middle of December, nearly a month after Dick's departure, as the story was told me many years ago by an old settler in that part of the Territory, (he is long since dead,) Clariss was suddenly aroused from her warm bed of buffalo robes by an awful, crashing noise, accompanied by the deep-mouthed baying of the two hounds Dick had left behind to protect her. She always kept them in the cabin at night with her, where they slept in a cor-

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ner on a pile of "rejected" furs, and she supposed, as she was so abruptly awakened, that they were still inside, disturbed only by some prowling bear or wolf they had scented, until the shattering noise caused her to sit up and attempt to discover the reason of the terrible clatter. In a few moments, as she strainingly peered into the dim gray light of the rapidly approaching day, a wild, shrill, heart-piercing cry greeted her ears that almost stagnated the blood in her veins; and it appeared to come from the depth of the timber on the creek.

For a second or two she was paralyzed, and could not stir a finger. But she, who had ever been a stranger to the sensation of fear, shook off by a determined effort of her will the

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queer feeling that had momentarily overpowered her, got out of bed, and lighted the solitary candle her home afforded, to investigate the source of her alarm. Much to her surprise, neither of the dogs was to be seen. Looking cautiously around, Clariss discovered that the window at the north end of the room, near where they were in the habit of lying, was completely torn out, glass, sash, and all.

She at once saw that this was the dogs' work in their frantic efforts to get outside, where she felt certain something extraordinary must have happened to so excite them. She had now completely recovered her normal self-possession; so she put on her buckskin suit as quickly as possible,

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and taking a loaded rifle from the elk antlers over the huge fireplace in the corner, she opened the door and went out of the cabin.

The air, cool and crisp from the snow-covered mountains, fanned her heated cheeks as she quietly stood there for a moment, waiting for some sound to reach her ears, but nothing disturbed the matchless stillness save the gurgling of the rills over their pebbly beds; and were it not for the broken window and the disappearance of the dogs, she fancied all might have been only a wild dream, so calm seemed her surroundings as she contemplated the scene.

But the dogs, where were they? As the thought of their absence came to her mind, she advanced cautiously in

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the direction of the timber, encouragingly calling each hound by his name as she moved slowly forward.

Suddenly, "Tige," the larger of the two, came bounding out of the underbrush, closely followed by "Buck"; then she began to feel reassured as they hurried toward her, responsive to her summons. As "Tige" approached her, she noticed in the dim, uncertain light—for it was not yet day in the forest—that he was heavily freighted; there was some dark object in his ponderous jaws which made him stagger. At first sight she thought it was a cub, or a lynx; but, horror!—in a moment the dog laid at her feet the nude body of an Indian child, eight or ten months old!

Clariss nearly fainted as she real-

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ized the nature of the dog's burden, and caught hold of a tree to support herself as the shock passed through her. Most women would have incontinently fled from the spot and locked themselves up to drive the dreadful experience from their thought; not so, however, was it with this physically fragile daughter of the mount-ains. Her young life had been one continuous familiarity with scenes of trouble, danger, and the weird in nature, so she was not in the least dis-comfited after the initiatory shock; the timidity inherent in her sex was immediately, by strong will-power, completely eliminated from her being, and she promptly acted as the strange circumstances facing her in her solitariness demanded; and she

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did it in obedience to that womanly love and tenderness she was so abundantly possessed of.

Of course her first impulse, after recovering from her agitation, was to learn whether the babe still lived. She pitifully knelt down, placed her hand on the little breast over the spot where its heart was located, but felt no responsive beat; its flesh was cold, its limbs already rigid — the child was dead !

A pang of instinctive maternal sorrow thrilled her as she took the diminutive corpse in her arms to more closely examine it. She was surprised to see how emaciated its whole body was, how shriveled the little limbs, and how plainly the want of nourishment was depicted in its wan face,

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and she knew the child had suffered for want of food. There were the marks of the hound's terrible teeth where he had taken hold to carry it, but otherwise there was no laceration of the body; and considering all these facts, Clariss's face brightened at the thought that the dog had not killed the child after all, but had found it with life already extinct and thus brought it to her.

She took up her burden of death tenderly in her arms and carried it to a little "oak-opening" north of the cabin, not far from one of the windows, where a clump of the tall scarlet cacti grew luxuriantly, whose wealth of bloom in its season was "a thing of joy" to her. There gently placing the dead baby on the brown

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sod for a moment, she went into the house for a blanket to wrap it in, and a spade. Quickly returning, she dug a grave for the little Indian, where the wolves could not molest it nor the red-wattled buzzards batten on its delicate bones.

This Christian office completed, she prepared and ate her frugal breakfast; after which, taking her rifle, she went into the forest again to make a reconnaissance and find out if possible something that would tell her more of the strange and sad occurrence of the early morning.

The hounds followed their mistress, of course, but she was not as friendly disposed toward "Tige" as had been her wont, for somehow she still felt inclined to fasten the guilt of the

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baby's death upon him, and he kept himself at a more than usually respectful distance behind her, as if he knew that she suspected him. Clariss occupied herself more than two hours in investigating every clump and thicket, aided by the dogs, whom she made use their long sharp noses to the best advantage.

At last "Tige" insensibly led her to a little heap of ashes in the densest portion of the timber, yet not more than an eighth of a mile from the door of her cabin. The thinly scattered tufts of bunch-grass in the vicinity were somewhat flattened, indicating that they had recently been trodden upon, and as soon as she saw these signs of disturbance she stopped, and thrusting her hand into the di-

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minutive mound of ashes found they were still warm, as she had suspected.

She now knew that some one had camped there the preceding night, and an Indian unquestionably: the remains of the fire proved that, for the white man generally builds one so large that the heat drives him away, while the savage makes a small one, and hovering over it with his blanket, which protects it, receives the sum total of warmth.

Clariss now began, in her instinctive manner, child of the forest and mountain that she was, to methodically investigate for "signs" that would unmistakably reveal to her the character of the sequestered camp's last night's occupant. She got down prone upon the ground and examined

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critically each separate blade of the disturbed grass with all the astuteness of the savage, and after patiently devoting half an hour to this intricate work she discovered the impress of a foot, small, symmetrical, and moccasined; also that great caution had been exercised to conceal its owner's presence there. Clariss was so perfect in the subtle art the Indians had taught her during her nearly five years' constant association with them, that not only could she determine the footprint to be that of a squaw, but the tribe to which she belonged, and the very intent to hide the fact of her migration to the vicinity.

Of course as these revelations manifested themselves to Clariss under her rigid scrutiny, she was more or less

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excited; not so greatly, perhaps, as was Robinson Crusoe when he came suddenly upon that mysterious footprint on the shore of his desert island.

Clariss was only annoyed at her discovery, because she could not understand the meaning of any Indian's presence near her home at that season; for the Ute men were all on their annual hunt in the Plains region below the mountains, and the camp of their women was many miles south of there. Yet that faint imprint on the grass was made by a Ute squaw; there was no mistake on that point.

How easily the problem which so disturbed her could have been solved if Dick had only been honest and

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told his wife the true cause of his absence. She would have then known that *revenge* was the incentive which had brought the Indian woman to the vicinity of his cabin. But poor Clariss was in blissful ignorance of her husband's crime; and at night, in the solitude of her room, with no companionship but the dumb hounds, she continued to ponder and worry over the strange incidents of the morning. She was not at all afraid, but the affair alarmed her simply because of the mystery surrounding it. She remained awake for hours dwelling upon it; nor could she banish it from her thoughts all the next day.

CHAPTER IX.

The Shadows Deepen.

ONE evening about two weeks after the advent of the prowling squaw, Dick returned. He was so delighted to see Clariss, that when her more than usually demonstrative greetings were concluded, he told her he would now remain at home and never leave her for a longer period than a day or two. He had been more than well paid for his trip, and he threw into her lap, as he communicated this joyful promise, a shot-bag half-full of American gold coin, the result of the sale of his furs captured during his

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absence. He told her that the money was for her; to hide it in some safe place, and that he would constantly add more to it, so that if he should die first she would not be dependent on the charity of her people. He then subsided into silence near the fire, while Clariss, her heart filled with joy, commenced preparations for their supper.

Pretty soon, between the great puffs of smoke he drew from his pipe, he began to inquire how she had gotten on during his absence, and whether she had been lonesome. All of his conversation did not require more than five minutes of his time after his arrival, for he was never a great talker, but he sat and listened to Clariss as she answered all his ques-

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tions at length. She related in the most minute detail everything that had come to her in her strange experience, but she did not notice his convulsive start, nor the dark scowl on his face, when she reached that part of her story about her mysterious visitor and the dead child. But when their meal was served, he ate so little and appeared so nervous that she playfully chided him upon his want of appetite after his long day's ride.

Never since that golden morning nearly six years before, when he "fust sot eyes on Clariss" as she dipped up the sparkling water from its rocky bed at her father's door to hand him a drink, had Dick Curtis ever spoken but gently to his wife; now he looked

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up darkly at her, and harshly replied:
“What consarn o’ yourn is it ef I
don’t eat like ez I war a bar? ’Pears
ter me I hev larned ter tuk keer o’
myse’f ’thout yer hevin’ any call ter
jor ’bout it; yer tongue jess goes like
er mill! Ef I’d know’d yer war go-
in’ ter quarrelin’ ’bout my eatin’ an’
sich, I’d a-stayed in ther woods: yer
fault-findin’ riles me!”

Then giving a fearful dig with his
heavy boot into “Tige’s” ribs, who
at that unlucky moment happened to
come sniffing toward him, he turned
around on his chair and commenced
to fill his pipe, while the discomfited
dog retreated, howling, to his pile of
furs in the corner.

Poor Clariss was so completely
dumbfounded at the sudden change

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in her husband's manner that she simply dropped like a wet rag on the floor, so terribly had the shock affected her.

Dick looked bewilderingly around when he saw his wife fall, like a man who had suddenly awakened from a horrid dream, and did not know what to do, he was so thoroughly frightened. But in a moment his better nature and love for Clariss reasserted itself, and frantically rushing to where she was lying, he lifted her in his brawny arms and placed her tenderly on a pile of buffalo robes, all the while "dad-burning" himself for a "dern'd fool,"—his only approach to swearing,—and pouring into her ears his penitence for his unwarranted conduct.

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Clariss, at these evidently sincere manifestations of his sorrow, opened her eyes, and sat up, clinging to him in her deep agony: she was ashamed, disgraced, and crushed; she trembled like a poplar—for such an experience had never before come to her in all her young life, either at her father's or since her marriage; and Dick was really alarmed at her condition.

“Thar, Ciss,” said he soothingly, as he toyed with her golden curls, patted her head, and petted her in his rough way, though it was as honest and sincere as if he had been the very impersonation of grace—“thar, Ciss, don't tuk on so; dad-burn the rotten luck! I didn't know w'at I wuz a-doin' of. I know I'd oughtn't ter be let live for treatin' on yer so.

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I dunno w'at ails me: kin yer tell?
I ain't wantin' yer ter cry, Clariss;
w'at kin I do ter make yer forgit all
this hyar tantrum o' mine? I jess
despise myse'f fer them jawin' words,
an' I'll be dad-burned ef yer shill
hear any more on 'em."

Dick could not be eloquent, but he meant all he said, and Clariss knew it. So her sympathetic heart and loving nature went out to him again, and he realized that he was forgiven. Yet, notwithstanding his sincerity, he lacked the moral courage to tell his wife that it was remorse for his unwarranted murder of that woman's husband which so disturbed him, coupled with the fact that she had been hounding his trail ever since. He knew perfectly well what her visits to

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the cabin foreboded, but, afraid to disclose it to Clariss, had cowardly vented his rage on the unsuspecting girl.

All that night he tossed and tumbled on his bed, for he felt that it would not now be prudent for him to remain at home while that squaw lived. His soul revolted at the idea of shooting her and thus ridding himself of her presence at once; he thought that if he could go off again she might wear herself out following him, and then her blood would not be on his head. But what excuse could he make to Clariss after his earnest protestations that he would not leave her again? So sorely puzzled was he over the question that he could not sleep.

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When after breakfast next morning Clariss saw Dick busy himself with his horses and pack animals, evidently getting ready for another trip, she wonderingly inquired why he was making such elaborate preparations, and where he was going.

Dick answered his wife evasively, though he was gentle as ever. He told her that he had met some parties while at Rayado who wanted him to join them on a buffalo hunt down on the Plains, but that at first he had refused, and given up the idea until he had slept over it, and had concluded to go, thinking there might be some big money in it for him. He had just time to overtake the outfit at Hole-in-the-Rock if he started at once, and he must light out

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right away. He was soon ready to leave, and Clariss bade him an affectionate and unusually demonstrative farewell; but her heart was sore, for the seeds of doubt in his sincerity had for the first time implanted themselves in her heretofore too confiding nature.

It was just fairly day—they had risen very early—when Dick mounted “Kaintuck,” whistled to the deerhounds, and was off as the sun gilded the upper edge of the cañon’s walls. Clariss stood outside the gorge, as was her wont on such occasions, but she could not help thinking of his strange conduct, for which she vainly essayed to divine a cause; and when she saw him a mere speck on the crest of the giddy mesa in the full

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sheen of the morning light—and he soon passed out of sight—she retreated to her lonely room, soul-sick and despondent.

CHAPTER X.

The Mysterious Trail.

DICK, either purposely or forgetting to do so, did not tell his wife how long he proposed to remain away, and now nearly three weeks, uneventful thus far, had passed, and still no sign or word came to the suffering girl. Late one night, however,—it was that of the third Sunday after Dick's abrupt departure,—Clariss had long since retired and was sleeping peacefully, when she was suddenly awakened by a fearful howl in concert from "Buck" and "Tige," who had madly rushed to the door, which

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they were now scratching and gnawing vigorously in their frantic efforts to get out. They had evidently tried the window first, but Dick had barred that before he left by nailing some rough-hewn oak slats across the lower half of the frame, in order to prevent a repetition of their last disastrous escapade; so they were driven to the only legitimate exit in their despair and rage.

Clariss ordered the dogs to be quiet, which mandate they whiningly obeyed, while she got out of bed, and going to a loophole in the wall, looked out toward the timber and listened. It was intensely dark; there was no moon, so she could discern nothing, but holding her ear to the opening, heard, or fancied she heard, a light

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footstep that was rapidly receding. She patiently stood there for some moments, her heart beating violently, waiting for further developments; but the dogs now drooping their great ears and retiring of their own accord to the pile of furs in the corner, began to curl themselves up after the manner of their normal habit when going to sleep, and she knew that whatever had caused their uproar had vanished; so she too betook herself to bed again, nothing more occurring during the long hours before day to disturb the ordinary quiet of her cabin.

The instant that morning entered her windows, Clariss was up. Her first act after dressing was to take her rifle, let the dogs out, herself im-

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mediately following, to learn if possible something of the cause of the night's alarm. A sharp white frost covered the scarped mountain-side, the emerald needles of the pines, the skeleton limbs of the leafless oaks, and the whole valley, in its crystal sheen,—for winter came early in the deep gorges of the Range so far above the sea level. The slightest track, whether of the ponderous, shambling bear, the stealthily stepping lynx, or the diminutive “collared bunting,” stood out in bold insculpture on the sparkling rime, wherever the sun's rays illumined the little bottom away from the shadow of the cañon's walls.

“Buck” and “Tige” walked leisurely into the crisp air, their noses elevated as they sniffed energetically,

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while Clariss, before she had fairly stepped over the threshold, saw within a rod of the door, in a dozen different places, the imprint of a moccasined foot clearly cut in the white pall that was spread over the earth. Of course she was terribly disturbed at first; around the cabin that mysterious trail was reproduced a score of times, as Clariss in her deep-read mountain lore discovered while she followed and counted its various windings. She tracked it to the little grave in the oak-opening north of the hut, where the mother of the buried babe had evidently paused some time; and from that fact Clariss now knew who her strange midnight visitor was. But how the mother of the child knew where it was, puzzled Clariss,

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and the only way she could account for it was that the woman must have secretly watched her that morning from some secure place in the timber which even the dogs had failed to discover—probably from the top of a tree.

At one end of the pile of rocks that covered the body of her child and protected it from the jaws of the ravenous wolves, the mother had affixed two curiously fashioned willow twigs; a trifling circumstance in itself to the careless observer, but full of portent to one who could interpret the mystic symbolization of the Indian's silent language. Clariss thoughtfully contemplated the curious emblem of a savage mother's feelings for a few moments, and then again took up

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the squaw's trail. It led her through the fringe of timber to the bank of the stream, across, and on into the deep forest, where she abandoned it and turned to her cabin, not so excited as when she had started, but more mystified than ever.

By what subtle perception the Indian woman learned that Dick and his hounds were not at home, is one of those remarkable evidences of the astuteness of the race which the white man fails to comprehend. She never would have ventured there if he had been, as the deer-hounds always remained outside of the cabin, and she would have been torn in pieces by them; for their hatred toward the "breed" was even greater than that of their master, if such a thing were

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possible. She immediately followed on Dick's trail after her midnight visit to her baby's grave, as subsequent events as they are related will confirm.

The squaw certainly bore no malice toward Clariss—the lonely wife was secure in that belief; but of the cause of the woman's repeated visits to the cabin, she was as profoundly ignorant as the hounds themselves. She understood perfectly well the meaning of the strangely fashioned twigs at the head of the little grave near her window, but their application—*revenge!*—she never for a moment connected with either herself or Dick. In fact, the very presence of the symbols also confidently assured her that even "Tige," of whom she was

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still suspicious at times, must henceforth be held guiltless of the child's murder.

Poor girl ! She little dreamed that the shadow of the real criminal's Nemesis already hovered over her once-happy home, and that when the hour came its black wings would encompass her in the sorrow they would inevitably bring.

CHAPTER XI.

Hearth-breaking Surprise to the Lonely Wife.

ANOTHER week dragged on its lonesome rounds; the events of that exciting night only a short time before were still fresh in Clariss's memory, but she had naturally subsided into the ordinary current of her sequestered life again. She performed automatically the simple daily routine of duty the care of her severely plain home demanded, giving herself up to the flattering dream which hope cherished, that her truant husband would soon return. Every afternoon, as ex-

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pectancy heightened and the weather permitted, she would sit on a rude bench that Dick had constructed for her in a leisure moment, just outside of the cabin door, and watch the rugged trail on the crest of the mesa for his coming. She did not, however, as Evangeline is portrayed, listlessly gaze into the "blue empyrean," seeking the "silver lining," for Clariss even at these times occupied herself with her knitting-needles, or some simple work not requiring much mental effort; for she was rarely absolutely idle—the result of her early training under her mother's guidance. "Buck" and "Tige" were her inseparable companions on such occasions; they would lie quietly near her, their great lustrous eyes watching every

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movement of her swift fingers as she fashioned the yarn into shapely mittens or warm stockings for the absent one. They were ever on the alert for any "varmint" that might have the temerity to venture near the presence of their sacred charge.

On Monday, after more than a week had elapsed since the Indian woman's last visit, a charming winter's afternoon, Clariss, whose anxiety increased in a ratio corresponding with the too slow passage of the hours, was in her favorite position on the rustic seat outside her cabin, the dogs, as usual, lying near her. She had been there but a short time, when up from the cañon there suddenly rose a noise like the rustling of mighty wings.

Clariss jumped to her feet in a mo-

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ment; but, strangely, neither "Tige" nor "Buck," who had as quickly risen from their comfortable postures, uttered a single bark or howl! Their sharp noses were of course at once elevated in the direction from whence the sound proceeded, and almost immediately their tails began to wag in that deliberate and confident manner which dogs of their breed are wont to exhibit when they catch the scent of anything they are familiar with.

Clariss observed this action of her two protectors, her heart in her mouth for joy, because she understood what it meant at once: they had winded something that belonged to her home, and what could it be but the approach of their master? This she believed perfectly, as she peered into the shade

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of the cañon for the form of her husband, whom her emotion told her was near. But when in another moment the deer-hounds he had taken away with him emerged from the sumac thicket that hid the rocky trail, and there was no report of a rifle, his invariable signal to let her know that he was near, she became dizzy, and the blood in her veins almost ceased to circulate.

Now she knew that he was not there, and the return of his hounds alone filled her soul with a torturing presentiment that something terrible must have befallen him. She went into the cabin for a moment and threw herself despairingly upon the bed, almost ready to give up now. But by an effort of that strong will-

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power which had so often served in the hour of great emergencies, she soon recovered her normal coolness, came outside again, and pityingly contemplated "Bruce" and "Pont," who, gaunt, bloody, and mud-be-grimed, panting, and evidently exhausted by travel, laid themselves down at her feet and appealingly gazed into her face.

She then went and cut from a quarter of deer hanging on a wooden peg in the wall near the door some strips of the dried venison, and fed to the half-famished hounds. After their appetites had been appeased, they both ran to the mouth of the cañon and back again to where Clariss stood earnestly watching their actions, several times, all the while

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whining, and at intervals interjecting a short, quick characteristic yell, in their endeavors to induce her to follow them. "Pont" even exhibited so much sagacity as to take hold of her buckskin skirt with his great white teeth, and persistently pull at it in his earnestness to make himself understood. Poor girl! Too well she comprehended what in their mute appeals they were trying to tell her; but as night was now already upon the little valley, she was compelled to postpone any further action until the morrow: so she almost despairingly sought her lonely bed, to brood over her deep trouble and to formulate her plans, that when day came again she could intelligently carry them out.

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Only disturbed snatches of sleep visited her eyes that seemingly interminable night, and when the sun came shining into the great cañon next morning Clariss was more than half-way on the "trail" to Tom Boggs's, a brother-in-law of Kit Carson's, her nearest white neighbor, a wealthy ranchero whose hacienda was on La Purgatoire (or "Picket-Wire," according to the corruption of the Spanish by the American residents there, for the name of that river), about thirty miles from her home.

On revolving the distressing subject over in her mind during the sleepless hours of the night, Clariss determined to go and inform Mr. Boggs of her suspicions concerning her husband, and be advised as to the best course

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to pursue. So at the first streak of dawn she was up, saddled her pony, and after shutting the exhausted deer-hounds in the cabin, taking "Buck" and "Tige" for an escort she started across the Range—for she was an expert rider, and her animal as sure-footed as a burro.

CHAPTER XII.

Clariss goes in search of help.

CLARISS arrived at the Boggs hospitable ranch a short time after nine o'clock, and found all the elder members of the family just finishing their chocolate.

To them she poured out her sorrows; relating her strange experience with the squaw, the circumstance of the deer-hounds' return, and their intelligent efforts to induce her to follow them.

Tom listened attentively to her sad story, and when she had finished,

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told her to "keep up a good heart," assuring her that he would do everything possible to assist her in finding her husband. He then ordered his horse, to go and counsel with some of the other ranchmen on the river in relation to instituting a search for the missing man as soon as they could muster a party. Settlers were widely separated from each other in those early days on the border, and a neighbor was considered "close" at twenty miles.

After Tom had left the room to start on his mission, his estimable wife through much persuasion and motherly comforting succeeded in inducing the almost heart-broken Clariss to drink a cup of tea, eat something, and then lie down and go to

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sleep; for the good old woman saw that the "child," as she called Clariss, would soon drop from sheer excitement and exhaustion if she could not be calmed, so exerted all her feminine ingenuity to effect it.

It was long after dark when Boggs returned, bringing with him a Mexican and two Americans. He told Clariss, who only a few moments before his arrival had awakened from her much-needed rest, that they would leave for her cabin early in the morning, and from there follow up Dick's "trail," which, with the assistance of the deer-hounds, if they would promptly "lead out," he hoped they would soon strike and bring her good news of him.

He tried every art, in his honest

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rough way, to cheer up the "pore child," and with the aid of his wife succeeded in nearly restoring her normal hopeful condition by the time it was necessary that they all retire; but in the depth of his own mind Tom Boggs verily believed that when Dick should be found, his bleached bones would be the only thing left of him.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rescue of the Lost Hunter.

BREAKFAST was disposed of by candlelight next morning, and just as the sun's broad disk appeared on the horizon of the wide valley, Boggs's little party organized for the search of Dick Curtis, accompanied by Clariss, the dogs, and Mrs. Boggs, who had kindly determined that she would go and stay with the poor child until something definite was learned of her husband's fate, started for the isolated cabin at the mouth of the great cañon.

THE RESCUE.

All were necessarily on horseback, for there were no wagon-roads in the Territory then except the Santa Fé trail, and they only followed it across the Arkansas, where they immediately left it and made a detour into the heart of the Range.

They arrived at Clariss's home by half-past eleven, having ridden as rapidly as the precipitous and rocky cut-off through the mountains would permit; consequently their animals were considerably blown.

Clariss's first thought was for the deer-hounds, which she at once liberated and fed, and who, immediately after they were satisfied, commenced the same intelligent tactics pursued by them on the evening of their return to the cabin. This was a source

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of much satisfaction to both Boggs and Clariss, for they were now confident there would be no difficulty in starting them on Dick's trail.

The horses were picketed on the bottom and each fed a ration of barley that Boggs had brought from the ranch, and while they were eating, Mrs. Boggs and Clariss prepared dinner; the Mexican meanwhile packing the provisions and equipage for the trip, on the backs of a couple of burros, the property of Dick.

About three o'clock the party struck out, carrying sufficient rations to last them a week. The deer-hounds, the moment they saw that arrangements were being made for a journey, seemed to comprehend the situation of affairs, and could hardly contain themselves.

THE RESCUE.

They showed their delight by every manifestation of canine joy: they ran into the cañon and out again, snapped at the patient burros, jumped at the horses, barking as loudly as they could all the while, apparently impatient of the delay in starting.

The little cavalcade moved out at a brisk walk into the sumac copse, through which the trail into the cañon ran at its inception; the deer-hounds, well in advance, fairly settled down to business, with their long noses close to the ground, deeply bay-ing, indicating to Boggs that they were on the scent of their own track by which they had returned home.

They reached a spring about eleven miles from the cabin that night, where they determined to camp, for

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the trail over which the hounds had led them was so terribly rough, and so precipitous in many places, that the horses could hardly retain their footing. All the animals were badly winded when they arrived there, and darkness coming quickly upon them they did not deem it prudent to venture farther, although the hounds were as eager as ever, and had to be tied up to prevent them from going ahead.

At the first glimpse of dawn next morning the horses were saddled and the men through breakfast, ready to mount and start, waiting for it to grow light enough for them to see the trail. As soon as it came they at once pushed forward, the hounds as usual in front, whom they relig-

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iously followed, and who were apparently more excited than on the preceding afternoon.

They had not advanced more than three miles, when upon entering a sheltered little valley they saw the two burros Dick had driven away with him, their packs of furs still properly adjusted on their saddles, slowly walking, and cropping the dry grass on their way to the cañon. This strange incident gave a fresh impetus and a new hope for the outcome of their mission which it was not inspired with before, and they naturally spurred their animals into a lope as soon as they reached the smooth intervalle. They did not attempt to catch the burros, knowing that the faithful creatures would go

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to their rude but comfortable quarters without any interference; for these patient beasts, like cats, become attached to localities, and will never desert them voluntarily. Besides, as Boggs suggested to his companions, their arrival at home with their packs intact would inspire and encourage the "women-folks" with hope, as their presence had already inspired them.

The valley was nearly four miles wide, which they passed over in three-quarters of an hour, and when the trail left it again it entered another rough, rocky series of small cañons similar to those they had encountered the day before.

By noon, after a weary and difficult climb, they came to a "bench," in

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mining parlance; that is, a depression of the strata, which had by some natural agency æons ago been cut out, as it were, of the side of the mountain near its summit, and their way now followed the meanderings of this bank of a mighty precipice, whose wall rose perpendicularly from its base in the terrible gorge below their dangerous path more than two thousand feet without a break in its weather-polished face.

As they were cautiously approaching one of the most acute curves the narrow trail made on the edge of this dizzy shelf of granite, the hounds, seized by a sudden impulse, bounded forward and were soon lost to sight around the sharp turn. But they had evidently stopped abruptly not a great

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distance beyond, where their baying seemingly became more furious than at any time before during the trip, and increased in distinctness as the party advanced, the reverse of which would have been the case were they still running the trail.

In a few moments Boggs and his companions had passed the projecting point of the mountain's side, where almost immediately the trail broadened out, and ran through a relatively level plateau five or six hundred rods wide. Its upper edge was fringed with a dense growth of pine, beyond which, but elevated thirty or forty feet, was a beautiful prairie, apparently several square miles in extent.

They could now see the dogs close

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to the timber rushing backward and forward in front of some dark object as yet undiscernible. Near by it a horse was quietly cropping the dried grass. Boggs recognized the animal immediately, notwithstanding its great distance, as the Kentucky thoroughbred owned by Curtis, famous all over the region,—for there was not another such horse in the Territory; he could not be mistaken, and the others of his party agreed with him.

This discovery of course excited them all; for now they felt assured that the mystery surrounding the fate of the missing man would probably soon be solved. Boggs and the two Americans broke into a quick lope the moment they struck level ground, leaving the Mexican to come after

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them with the burros at their usual gait.

In less than a quarter of a mile they came up to where the hounds were, and a sight confronted them that almost made their hair stand on end, old mountaineers as they were. Drenched in his own gore, and tightly bound with a hair lariat to a stunted oak sapling above the trail, was the apparently lifeless body of Dick Curtis!

They recognized him more by his magnificent physique and the presence of the horse, than by his features, for his face was one mass of blood, which had also trickled down his limbs and formed in little pools on the brown sod at his feet. Scarcely a rod distant, right on the trail

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directly in front of him, were the mangled remains of an Indian woman, who had evidently been torn in pieces by the dogs! So completely in shreds was she that Boggs and his men could not tell whether the wolves had already been at work or not; probably not, though, or Dick would have shown signs of their visit too. Lying near her were a rude flint knife, a broken bow, and an otter quiver half-filled with arrows. The horse, which had now come up, neighing, to the party, was also terribly wounded, the whole of his right flank having seemingly been torn by the sharp claws of some wild animal.

While the two Americans were contemplating in silence this horrid spectacle, half paralyzed by the suddenness

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of the shock, Boggs had dismounted and was endeavoring to learn whether a spark of animation remained in the rigid form of Curtis; but all of them supposed him to be dead. His heart just moved—that was all that could be said.

As soon as that fact was discovered they cut the lariat that bound him, and laying him on the grass, the two Americans commenced to chafe those portions of his limbs where the cruel cord had sunk deep into the flesh, to restore the circulation, while Boggs, pulling a flask of brandy from the inside pocket of his shirt, raised the wounded man's head, pried his teeth open with a bowie-knife, and poured a liberal portion of the strong liquor down his throat. In a few seconds the

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effect was visible: Dick gave a convulsive gasp, and fell back moaning.

Now they knew that life was not extinct, and the Mexican, who by this time had arrived, was ordered to make a fire quickly. A soft bed of pine-needles covered with blankets was improvised, upon which Dick was carefully placed, and as soon as some water was heated his face was washed, to learn the nature and extent of his injuries. His face was hacked all over, as were his arms and legs, by the rude flint knife; an arrow had been fixed into his shoulder, which required the combined strength of Boggs and one of the other men to pull out. But none of his wounds were necessarily dangerous; loss of blood and want of nourishment had

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more than anything else brought him so low. They were certain, however, but for their timely arrival he would soon have been dead.

As closely as Boggs could approximate it, Dick must have been without anything to eat or drink for at least seventy-two hours, presuming that the hounds had started for home immediately after he became insensible and they had killed the squaw, and supposing that all had occurred on the morning of the day they had arrived at the cabin. How much more time might have possibly elapsed, they could only learn by comparing notes with Curtis himself, which of course he was unable to furnish them as yet; but there was no doubt that the death of the woman was the work of the dogs.

THE RESCUE.

The next thing to be done now was to prepare some nourishment. A soup of jerked venison was hastily made, coffee boiled, and both fed to Dick, sparingly at first, under which treatment in a couple of hours his strength was considerably recuperated and his senses completely restored. But he did not utter a word !

That evening a litter was constructed of small but strong oak poles and a pair of blankets, which was intended to be slung between the two burros, as Curtis was too weak to ride otherwise. (This method of transporting dead or wounded men is frequently resorted to in the mountains where there are no wagon-roads, and is copied from the Indians.)

CHAPTER XIV.

A Joyful Home-coming.

DICK passed a comfortable night, considering his exhausted condition, and by sunrise in the morning the party started on their return trip, expecting to make the cabin by evening if no accident befell them, as it was only thirty-two or thirty-three miles at most, and now they were acquainted with the trail. The provisions, except what would be required for their noon meal, and all the camp equipage, were abandoned, so that the burros might carry Dick and his litter as lightly laden as possible over the rough road.

THE HOME-COMING.

When they had proceeded about half-way on their journey, Boggs with commendable forethought left the party and hastened on to apprise Clariss of her husband's coming, for the sympathetic old man was fearful that Dick's terribly cut-up face would too severely shock the young wife's nerves were she to see him without some kind of preparation. He did not know her firmness and force of character as well as does the reader.

Boggs came in sight of the cabin from the top of the mesa just as night began to envelop the little valley in its shadow, although it was but a short time after three o'clock,—for the hundred peaks of the Range which encompass it cut off the sun's rays long before he has really set,

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and during the winter months darkness comes early into the great cañon.

His approach was heralded of course some time before he emerged from the sumac copse, by those ever-vigilant sentinels "Buck" and "Tige," whose deep notes had commenced the moment his horse had entered the gorge, more than a mile from them—so acute were their scent and hearing.

At the first warning from the dogs Mrs. Boggs and Clariss hastened to the sumacs, where they anxiously waited ten minutes or more before Boggs rode out of the bushes that obscured the trail. The instant he saw the dim outline of the two women in the gloaming he blew a shrill blast of his hunting-whistle, a signal which had been agreed upon between them

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before he went away, should Dick be found alive.

When the discordant sound reached the poor girl's ears it seemed sweeter to her than the carol of birds in the springtime, and she fell upon Mrs. Boggs's neck in her joy, for it relieved her of a mighty burden of sorrow and soul-suffering. Only that morning the two fur-laden burros which Boggs's party had passed on the trail reached the cabin, their arrival filling her with new suspicions, and nearly extinguishing her already waning hope—an effect diametrically opposite to that predicted by the searching party.

His horse cared for, Boggs entered the cabin, and by the cheerful fire told the now somewhat excited girl

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the strange story of the party's adventures and the way Dick was found. He of course made the details as little repulsive as possible and as encouraging as the facts would warrant, but beyond what he and his companions had witnessed they were as ignorant as she,—for Dick had been persistently reticent; he would not talk about the terrible experience he must have passed through. Boggs firmly believed his silence was caused by chagrin; Dick, he supposed, dreaded to admit that he had been vanquished by a squaw: but Boggs kept his surmises to himself.

Arrangements were then made to receive the wounded man, and an excellent supper was prepared for the others, now momentarily expected.

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It seemed an interminable length of time to the anxious wife, and more than three hours elapsed after Boggs's arrival before "Buck" and "Tige" announced by their characteristic baying the approach of something. In a few moments after this demonstration of warning by the dogs, the party was at the door. Dick was carried in and placed on a pallet made of buffalo robes near the huge fireplace, up whose cavernous throat the yellow flames now roared, filling the room with a golden sheen. Clariss looked calmly on, her beautiful face suffused with unutterable joy, while rough but loyal hands performed their office; then when these men in their honest-hearted sense of seemliness went out into the night, she gently stepped to

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where Dick was so quietly lying, and half suppressing a cry of rapture, pillowed her head on his brawny breast.

It would be a profanation to, Asmodeus-like, lift off the roof of that humble cabin and intrude our presence on this reunion of loving hearts; rather let us emulate those broad-gauged "sons of the border," and remain with them outside of the room, oblivious of the sacred scene, only ever remembering that though the refinement of a conventional gentility is to all such children of nature a sealed book, their affection is as deep and enduring as that the highest culture can instill: the grizzly will die for her cubs and the cowardly wolf fight for her whelps, and, as rude as

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the demonstration of love by these people may appear, it is no less pure and strong for the time being than that which abides in the gentlest mother's breast.

The next day, Dick having sufficiently recuperated to no longer require other care than that which Clariss could bestow, Boggs, his estimable wife, and those who had accompanied them, repaired to their several homes, carrying with them a sense of having done their duty and the inextinguishable gratitude of Dick and his now joyful young wife.

CHAPTER XV.

Dick tells the Story of the Squaw's Terrible Revenge.

THE evening after all those who had done so much "Good Samaritan" work had departed, Dick was strong enough to sit up. He and Clariss, as of old, took their accustomed places about the cheerful fire; she doing some simple sewing, while he, reticent as usual, dreamily gazed into the glowing embers. The faithful Buck and Tige were comfortably curled up on their pile of rejected furs in one corner, and the now more than ever beloved intelligent deer-hounds in an-

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other. Were it not for Dick's battered face and bandaged shoulder, one might have supposed nothing had occurred to disturb the monotonous routine which had characterized their original happy life of the first years passed there.

Strange yet familiar pictures presented themselves in rapid succession to Dick's mental vision as he earnestly contemplated the coals on the great hearth before him: he saw again the low-browed mountains of his boyhood home; the spring near Tom Pollock's door, where he had "fust sot eyes on Clariss," gurgled musically as of old in his ears; he roamed once more the almost gameless forests of the "bloody ground"; and thus his bewildered brain continued to weave

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out of the embers those long since forgotten scenes of his early days, until he could hardly contain himself, the memories of the past crowded so thick upon him.

Clariss furtively watched him in his evident abstraction, but ventured no word, patiently waiting for him to speak, which she felt he must do presently, and she would then know the cause of his discomfiture, so palpable to her discerning mind.

The mortification of his recent adventure had made him disgusted with life there, and he wanted to return to his people, where he could relegate the shame of his "rotten luck," as he had been mentally terming it, to oblivion. But he knew that he must unfold to his trusting wife the ques-

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tion of his leaving, which he had now seriously determined upon; and how she would regard it, worried him.

“Little geirl,” he began,—his pet term whenever he entered upon the confidential with Clariss,—“Little geirl, I hev ben thinkin’ powerful sence we-uns hev sot hyar ter-night, an’ I hev seed things which hez kim kind o’ suddint in ther fire, an’ they hev hanted me.”

“Dick, I know’d yer wuz a-lookin’ ez ef suthin’ wuz on yer mind yer wanted ter git shet of, w’en yer sot an’ peered so stiddy inter ther coals ez yer uster back ter pap’s ’fore we-uns kim outen ter this hyar kentry. W’at’s a-botherin’ o’ yer?” replied Clariss, in response to his appeal, as she dropped her work and gazed ear-

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nestly into the scarred face of her husband, which now in the vanishing light of the rapidly dying fire looked strangely dark and humiliated.

“Waal, little geirl, ther fac’ is I haint a-goin’ to leave this hyar cheer tell yer know all ez is a-worritin’ o’ me! Ef I’d a-’spected w’at I’d hed ter kim ter in these hyar Rocky Mountings, I’ll be dad-burned ef we-uns hed ever lef’ ol’ Kaintuck! But thar—things mought hev ben wuss; I haint got no grudge agin the place, yer onderstan’, little geirl, fer thar haint no sech mountings fer varmints nowhar ez I hev heered on, an’ I ’lowed we-uns ud jess live hyar reg’lar tel one on us wuz tuk orf, an’ I declar’ I hed no idee o’ levin’ ef it warn’t w’at’s brought me ter this

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hyar cabin all cut up; an' ef it had n't ben fer them thar Boggses ther wolves ed hed my carkuss clean picked afore now; an' 'twuz done through thet thar dad-burned squaw—me raised 'mong ther cussed breed, too; an' I thought I knowed all 'bout the'r carryin's on! I wouldn't cared haffen ez much ef it hed ben er buck Injin—but ter be so laid out by er dad-burn squaw, sech rotten luck gits me! I haint tol' no one yit how it war did—an' it war er blessin' thet I kep' my mouth shet; but I specs them ez foun' me hez er toler'blè idee, an' folkses ez live 'round hyar is boun' ter git hol' on it, an' ez soon ez it air hearn, I mought jess ez well be in hell. Fer yer know I'd be er no-'count critter sure 'nough,

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with thet thar desgrace a-hangin' over me, an' likely throwed inter my face suddint, any time an' anywhar!"

"I dunno, Dick," said Clariss, as the poor fellow buried his head with shame in his sympathetic wife's lap—"I dunno, Dick, jess w'at we-uns oughter do. Though I'd hate powerful ter leave hyar, yer knows bes'. I'm mos' afeared thar haint no ch'ice but ter git. But, Dick, yer haint tol' me nothin' yit; I hev ben nigh crazy ter hyar, though I wuz boun' not ter ax yer tel yer wuz well, ez I did n't want ter bother yer. Mebbe yer be feelin' ez if yer mought tell me all 'bout it now," pleadingly urged Clariss as she lovingly ran her small fingers through Dick's shabby locks, forgetting apparently that he had

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prefaced his remarks with the assurance that he would withhold nothing from her.

"Thet's 'zactly w'at I means ter do, little geirl, ez I hev tol' yer," responded Dick, as he felt her magnetic touch thrill through every fiber of his body, and raising his head again, continued: "fer yer know now we-uns hez got ter git outen this hyar kentry, an' it is right yer oughter know why I'm hevin ter do it, so ez not ter hev yer 'low I'm onreasonable 'bout it. Jess how this hyar fuss kim ter happen I wants yer ter onderstan' 'fore we-uns goes ter sleep ter-night, fer I 'spect ter light out mighty sud-dint w'en I gits things all sot, but thet'll tuk mor'n a week arter I kin git outen this hyar cabin.—Clariss,

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yer mought jess throw er handful o' them thar knots onto ther fire 'fore it goes clean out, fer I haint begin ter tell yer haffen w'at I wants ter yit, an' it's more'n likely ter git toler'ble cold ef we-uns sets hyar 'thout any fire."

Clariss promptly placed a large armful of the huge mountain-pine cones on the almost extinguished embers, and in a few moments, as the crackling flames rose up the wide throat of the huge chimney, the giant shadows began their weird play on the whitewashed walls, the dogs stretched themselves out on their pile of furs as the room warmed up, and Dick, lying on his pallet of buffalo robes by the side of the immense fireplace, asked Clariss to sit close to

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him, taking her little hand in his great paw; and contemplating her for a few seconds as the yellow flames lighted up her now sad face, he began again the story of his "rotten luck," but so full of interest to his patient wife:

"Yer see, little geirl, in ther fust place, I never tol' yer, ez I'd oughter a-did, thet I killed thet thar womin's husban'—she ez wuz a-botherin' o' yer, yer know—fer hevin' interfered with my beaver traps down onter ther branch one day. I never let on, yer know, when she brunged thet thar dead baby ter yer, an' yer thought Tige hed killed it. She, dad-burn it, war a-follerin' o' me all ther time then. An' "—

"Oh, Dick!" interrupted Clariss,

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as she looked imploringly into his face, her eyes suffused with tears, "yer haint got thet thar innercent baby's blood ter answer fer, hev yer? Yer didn't kill thet child, too? Ye didn't do thet? Tell me," she cried, as she leaned her head on his breast, overcome by the depth of her grief.

"No! Clariss; ez I hopes ter be fergiven et Judgemint, I didn't,—least I didn't knife nor shoot ther poor critter; I haint so wicked ez thet, though its mother laid ther blame onter me. Ther fac' is, it war her own doin's; it jess died o' starvation; she natarally dried up while she war a-houndin' my trail, dad-burn her! It war her own fault: w'at call hed she ter be a-follerin' o' me? I could got shet o' her any time a'mos';

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but I 'lowed it war too dern wicked ter shoot her."

Clariss grew nervous and excited beyond precedent as Dick made these horrible disclosures to her, so entirely unexpected; for she had never for a moment thought her husband capable of murder under any circumstances, and the terrible revelation completely unnerved her. She sobbingly begged him to go on, to tell her all, so that she might, in her own pure mind, find some palliation for his crime. As yet she saw nothing; the recital was revolting, and she was deeply distressed; but she refrained from becoming too demonstrative, endeavoring to keep her thoughts to herself.

"But Dick," she pleadingly urged, as she noticed that he seemed inclined

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to end his story there, "yer haint tol' me yit how yer kim ter be tied an' cut up, an' how 'Kaintuck' got hurted so bad: don't yer kip nothin' back from me now, Dick!"

"Little geirl, I'm a-kimmin' ter thet; I don't 'low ter kip nothin' back; but I seed how it war 'fectin' yer, an' it kind o' hendered me a-go-in' on.

"Waal, Clariss, I seed ther track o' thet pesky womin wharever I'd went arter I killed her husban'; I didn't mind it et fust—I hed them thar dorgs, Pont and Bruce; I warn't afeared—I knowed they'd tuk car' o' me; but how she kim ter get the bes' o' me arter all, I'm dad-burned ef I know; it war jes' my rotten luck, I 'specs.

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“Clariss, I’d lied ter yer w’en I tol’ yer I war a-goin’ buffaler-huntin’. I’d went back yander ter them Spanish Peaks, whar I’d hed sech ’mazin’ luck afore, an’ I killed an’ trapped more varmints nor them burros o’ mine could pack, an’ I hed ter cache mos’ o’ ther pelts; so afore we-uns gits outen hyar I’ll hev ter git ’em, ez they’s wuth a powerful ’mount o’ money.

“Waal, ter git back ter w’at I wuz a-tellin’ yer: I war a-gittin’ on, thinkin’ o’ hum an’ how soon I’d be thar, snakin’ along kind o’ easy-like, ’spectin’ ter reach ther cabin with my skins next night, an’ sech, an’ hed got ez fur ez thet thar little perarer by them thar pines w’at Boggs hev tol’ yer ’bout; thar ther trail runs down in-

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ter a swale, leavin' er kind o' 'cut-bank,' ther top o' which jess kims 'bout ter a man's head, ef he war a-walkin'; but dad-burn it! 'fore I'd reached thar, er pint o' woods stan's out.

"Thar them thar dorgs winded er monst'us black bar, an' w'en I kim up ter whar they hed ther varmint on ther stan',—sort o' tangled up in er bunch o' trees ez hed blowed down, er 'win'fall,' yer know, sech ez yer hev seed in ther timber 'roun' yer pap's in ther Cumb'lin Range,—waal, I seed ther bar ther minute I rid up; so I jumps off Kaintuck,—he'll stan' anywhar, yer know. We war then—him an' me—right on ther edge of ther timber an' under er clump o' heavy oaks, w'ich was clost together

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an' growin' 'mong ther pines; so I on'y hed ter go 'bout er hundred foot 'fore I wuz in range o' ther bar, standin' thar quiet an' a-watchin' ther dorgs. I pulled up ol' Nance, drawed er bead, an' knocked him cold fust shot. Yer see, I did n't stop ter load ag'in, like er dad-burned fool ez I wuz,—I'm sartain I never acted thet thar way 'fore,—but outs with my knife an' 'gins ter skin ther beast. I tell yer, Clariss, thet thar pelt o' hisn war a beauty, but I've clean lost it, an' I would n't er tuk two dollars fer it—dad-burn ther rotten luck !

“Waal, I hed n't got ther bar mor'n half skun, w'en I hearn Kaintuck gin ther awfulest squall ! an' ez I looked up mighty suddint ter whar I'd lef'

A PIONEER FROM KENTUCKY.

him, I could see him plain from whar I stood,—an' I'll be dad-burned ef er monst'us painter hed n't sprung outen one o' them thar oaks an' lit right onto 'Kaintuck's' flank, whar he hung on, an' war a-clawin' an' a-chawin', tryin' ter hol' his grip, while 'Kaintuck' war a-kickin' an' a-squealin', an' runnin' roun' in er circle! In course sech er varmint would start any hoss, 'specially ef it war on him: it started 'Kaintuck' an' me too. I drops my knife an' runs ez fas' ez I could git over the groun' ter help 'Kaintuck' git shet o' ther lion—thet's w'at folkses hyar calls 'em, 'mounting lions'; but ther haint nothin' but painters, same ez we-uns us' ter hunt in ther Cumb'lin Range w'en I war er boy.

THE SQUAW'S REVENGE.

“Waal, ’fore I’d got ten rod, a-go-in’ ter whar my gun war, hyar kim them dorgs, ‘Bruce’ an’ ‘Pont,’ jess a-tearin’ ’long; I’d called ’em, yer see, ther minute I’d sot eyes on ther varmint a-hangin’ onter ‘Kaintuck’s’ back, an’ ye’d orter seed thet thar painter drop offen him an’ light out fer ther timber w’en he heerd ’em!

“Like er dad-burned fool, I never picked up Nance, an’ ez soon ez ther painter let go his holt on ‘Kaintuck’ ther hoss knowed he war shet on him; an’ w’en he seed me an’ ther dorgs a-comin’, he stopped, an’ I caughted him,—or ruther, he kim up ter me. Yer never seed sech er sight on a beast: he war all clawed an’ bit, an’ bleedin’ powerful, an’ tremblin’ like er poplar.

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“Waal, I ’lowed ter myse’f that I’d walk him ter whar I seed some tall bunch-grass under thet thar dad-burned cut-bank on ther trail I wuz a-tellin’ yer ’bout, thinkin’ I mought mop some er ther blood offen him, ter larn how bad he war hurted, then leave him an’ go back an’ finish skin-nin’ ther bar an’ git ol’ Nance, fer I’d never ben so fer from my gun afore.

“We’s jess got to whar thet thar bank war highest, my head ’bout level with ther top, but I couldn’t see over it, w’en all ter onct, suddint ez light-nin’—whizz! whirr! bang! kim er dad-burned lariat roun’ my neck! ‘Kaintuck’ he gin er snort; he could see w’at was a-goin’ on an’ who wuz a-doin’ it, an’ he jumped clean away

THE SQUAW'S REVENGE.

from me,—he hates er Ingin ez wuss ez me,—an' ther fust thing I knowed I didn't know nothin'! Ther dad-burned ha'r rope hed choked me blind. I growed dizzy all ter onct, an' I couldn't see nor hyar no more nor er mole!

“Waal, w'en I kim to,—fer ther dad-burned rope quit a-chokin' me so bad,—thar I wuz all woun' up in thet thar lariat wuss nor er bluebottle in er spider's web! Tied tighter nor er nigger w'at's a-goin' ter be whipped, ter a old dead pine, an' thet thar dad-burned squaw a-dancin' roun' me ez ef she war crazy, an' me 'thout any knife, gun, nor dorgs. Durn my rotten luck!—Pont an' Bruce, yer see, hed lit out fer thet thar painter, an' couldn't hyar me

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callin' on 'em, an' thar I was, fer thet thar ornery womin ter kyarve me up ef she war er mind ter,—an' I 'spect thet war w'at she 'lowed ter do.

“How ther thing war did so suddint I'm dad-burned ef I kin tell; an' it makes me feel ez ef I war er borned idjit w'en I think on it. Me ter be did up theteway by er dad-burned squaw—it beats ther hants w'at cuts up so ornery in ther mountings back in ol' Kaintuck! Thar, Clariss, right in front o' me stood thet thar womin, jess like she war er she-grizzly w'at hed lost her cubs! Her eyes war a-snappin', an' she pulled her ha'r, howled, danced roun' like er lunatic, all ther time a-singin' o' her outlandish gibberish, w'ich I

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could n't no more onderstan' then er blue-gee in ther timber. Waal, arter er w'ile she kind o' quieted down, 'cause ez how her jaws gin out, I 'specs; then she comminced ter talk ter me, not any milder in her voice, fer she war now a-howlin' agin', but she quit cavortin' roun' me so spry-like. In course I did n't onderstan' her words; I hed no call ter—her signs war so plain thar war no need-cessity ter know w'at her jaws war a-tryin' ter tell me.

“She made me onderstan', fust, thet it war me ez hed killed her husban', an' thet she war a-goin' ter eat my heart fer it! Then she 'lowed she'd followed me more'n two moons, ter git holt o' me, a-walkin' on my trail tel her baby hed died jess 'cause

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she couldn't gin it any milk; an' fer thet she war goin' ter roas' my liver, an' then leave my bones on ther pe-rarer thar, jess ez I hed lef' his'n,—meanin' her husban'. Theterway she gin it ter me fer more'n ten minutes 'fore 'she started in ter cut. Then, fust, she jess jabbed me all over with thet dad-burned dull flint o' her'n, tel I begin ter feel kind o' faint-like, she'd bled me so powerful, yer see. How I did wish an' pray fer them two houn's to kim, w'ich I kip callin' ez long ez I hed stren'th!

“W'en she'd got tired o' jabbin' me she started in ter dance an' cavort 'roun' me ag'in; but she soon gin thet up, an' then I seed her stop all o' a suddint, ez ef she war thinkin' w'at ter do next, an' arter er minute

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she commenced ter pull a arrow outen her quiver, an' then I thought sure 'nough I war did fer, an' hed 'bout gin up; but w'en she drawed back her bow an' let fly, an' I knowed I wuz on'y hit in ther shoulder, I war sartain she war not ready ter kill me jess yit, an' I still hed hopes them thar dorgs might kim. But I war nigh 'bout dizzy then, an' I couldn't see nothin'; everything war black afore me; jess ther las' thing I 'members wuz hearin' ther bayin' o' Pont,— I knowed his voice; an' then I never knowed nothin' more tel thet thar brandy o' Boggs's brunged me to."

Dick then suddenly became silent, and gazed intently at Clariss, who, with blanched cheeks and eyes filled with tears, appeared to be looking

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into vacancy, so terribly had the horrid recital worked upon her gentle nature.

At last Dick spoke, after he had been attempting to read his wife's thoughts, but had failed:

“Thar, little geirl, I hev tol’ yer all, an’ it bothers me ter see yer tuk on thetaway; w’at’s did kain’t be undid, an’ we-uns mus’ soon git outen hyar.”

Clariss did not reply, but with a sigh she got up, and throwing a bear-skin over Dick,—the fire was out now,—she laid down on her bed and cried herself to sleep.

CHAPTER XVI.

Counting their Gold.

IN less than a week, Dick had so far recovered from his wounds as to be able to move around and commence preparations for his departure. He first went north to the spot where he had cached his furs on his last disastrous trip, and taking them to the Agency store at Rayado, converted them into cash, and bartered for sufficient provisions to last himself and Clariss on their projected journey across the Plains to the Missouri river.

He then turned homeward with his

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well-laden burros, accompanied, of course, by the ever-faithful "Bruce" and "Pont," not forgetting to make a detour to the spot where the squaw had vanquished him, in order to recover his pet rifle Nance. He found it intact, as there had been no storms to rust it. The bear-robe and the bear had been devoured by wolves, as had been the unfortunate squaw; for he could not resist the temptation of going to the cut-bank, so full of horrid memories, and he saw what was left of his antagonist,—only a few bones, bleaching where she had fallen in her endeavor to avenge her wrongs.

All this required about ten days of his time, and on the evening of the day he arrived at the cabin he and

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Clariss took their places at the huge fireplace, but for the last time. Presently Dick reached from a hole in the chimney a couple of canvas shot-bags, and pouring their contents of gold and silver upon the bear-robe that covered the pallet at the side of the jamb, asked Clariss to help him count it.

This was indeed a mental strain to which their brains were entirely unused, and great beads of perspiration stood in groups on Dick's forehead as he essayed to collect the refractory twenty-dollar and ten-dollar pieces into something like symmetrical piles. Clariss with her deft fingers had better success. She arranged the smaller coin, which submitted more easily to her gentle touch; and after an hour

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and a half of hard work, by the aid of a dead coal, and a piece of brown paper that had served its mission as a wrapper for a new pair of shoes for Clariss that Dick had brought from Rayado, they succeeded in adding the values of the several piles, and they aggregated the large sum of five thousand eight hundred-and-odd dollars,—an immense fortune for people of their class, sufficient for their needs, back in Kentucky, if judiciously husbanded, for the remainder of their lives.

The severe labor ended, they betook themselves to bed, worn out by the demands that evening had made upon their brain, where golden visions in their literal interpretation now danced through their heads.

CHAPTER XVII.

Farewell to the Raton Range.

THE next morning, a deliciously charming morning of the young new year, Dick and Clariss bade good-by forever to the rude cabin which had been the scene, for nearly six years, of so much happiness and misery. Dick was mounted on "Kaintuck," who too, like his master, had completely recovered, but was terribly scarred; and Clariss on her favorite pony. They left the mouth of the great cañon just as the sun began to tinge the crests of the mighty mesas

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with its hazy wintry light. Before them were driven all of their patient burros, on whose willing backs were packed the provisions for their long journey across the Kansas plains, and the few personal effects that either Dick or Clariss cared to carry back to the home of their youth. The dogs, too, accompanied their master and mistress, the former evincing the intensity of their canine joy as they ran, barked or howled in turn. Dick, sad, reticent and desponding, and Clariss tearful, as they crossed the first divide, about a mile from the cabin, and which now shut off, for all time to come, its rough but to her familiar and dear outline.

They arrived at Boggs's that evening, just as the twilight curve met

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the line of the mountain's horizon and darkness had commenced to cover the long valley of La Purgatoire, where Dick and Clariss were welcomed with all the warmth and honesty the words implied in the great-hearted West.

It had been arranged some time previously that Dick and Clariss should pass their last night before they left at the Boggs hospitable home, where from thence the next day they would join a caravan owned by Col. St. Vrain, of Mora, *en route* to Independence, Mo., at that time the objective point of all travel on the Santa Fé trail.

The kind-hearted Boggs wanted to purchase the burros and Clariss's pony, which it had been determined

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to leave behind; but neither she nor Dick would listen to such a proposition as taking money from those who had done so much for them. They made the good old man to whom they were so deeply indebted—very reluctantly, however—accept them as a gift, together with “Buck” and “Tige.” The deer-hounds, “Bruce” and “Pont,” Clariss declared she would never part with,—there were too many sad and joyful memories clustering around them,—and that she would care for them as long as they lived or she had a crust to divide. So it was determined that the beloved animals should go back to “ol’ Kaintuck.”

By noon the next day the expected caravan, with its long line of white-covered wagons, made its appearance

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on the trail in the distance, miles away yet; and soon Dick and Clariss, accompanied by the Boggses, rode down to the point where the road from the ranch intersected the great highway to the Missouri. Dick was mounted on "Kaintuck," and Clariss on her pony for the last time. The provisions and bedding were transported in a rude Mexican caretta, driven by one of Boggs's native peons, its huge wooden wheels groaning at every turn they made. The precaution had been taken to securely fasten the hounds "Buck" and "Tige," but the poor dogs tugged and strained at the ends of their stout chains, howling mournfully all the time in their futile efforts to get loose, for they seemed to realize, as Dick and Clariss

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rode away, that their master and mistress were abandoning them forever.

In about three hours the caravan arrived, halted, and in the last wagon was placed a woolen mattress for Clariss's comfort. Then she and Dick bade an affectionate farewell to their friends, and the great train moved on.

In a short time only a cloud of dust marked its place low down on the eastern horizon in the vast wilderness of monotony surrounding. And thus Dick and Clariss are, too, lost sight of to us in the purple mist that spreads over the far-stretching prairie, warning us that the night has come.

Figure 1 consists of two line graphs, (a) and (b), plotting the rate of reaction against temperature. Both graphs have a y-axis labeled 'Rate of reaction' and an x-axis labeled 'Temperature'.

Graph (a) shows a curve that starts at a low rate at 10°C, rises steeply to a peak at 40°C, and then levels off at higher temperatures. The peak is marked with a horizontal line and labeled '40°C'.

Graph (b) shows a curve that starts at a low rate at 10°C and rises gradually, reaching a higher rate at 40°C than in graph (a). The curve is marked with a horizontal line and labeled '40°C'.

